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RELIGIOUS LIFE

THE GUARDIAN SPIRIT CONCEPT

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The guardian spirit concept has been given more thorough comparative study than any other aspect of Northwestern culture. Benedict selected the practices of the Thompson Indians as the type picture for her general study of the concept.[1] Likewise much of her documentary data were drawn from the Northwest. Later Spier furnished a penetrating analysis for western America with the Klamath as the point of reference.[2] Very recently, under Spier's stimulation, Park made a similar but even more exhaustive analysis with the Paviotso as the point d'appui.[3]

It remains here, then, merely to add new data and inquire to what extent the conclusions of earlier writers may be modified thereby.

Descriptive Sketches

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For purposes of orientation three brief descriptions will be given, summarizing the spirit notions of the Sanpoil, the Kutenai, and the Carrier. These are selected because they represent high points in the differential development of the complex in the interior, and will provide bases upon which intervening variations may be pictured. Two other equally important groups for reference are the Thompson and the Klamath, but these, as indicated, have already been handled in comparative studies. Likewise the Paviotso of the Basin.

The Sanpoil pattern needs but brief résumé since it is already described in published form.[4] Spirits are non-human in character though they appear in visions and dreams in human guise. The "true" form is assumed while disappearing after the communion. The range of spirits is theoretically unlimited in both the animate and inanimate categories. Every known animal serves to some extent, though natural phenomena and inanimate objects are much less commonly exploited. Heavenly bodies do not contribute. Most spirits are generic in nature[5] but specific tutelaries are not uncommon. In the latter category fabricated objects are quite numerous.

It is incumbent upon every boy to engage in a series of one-night

[1] Benedict, *Guardian Spirit Concept.*
[2] Spier, *Klamath Ethnography*, pp. 239–79.
[3] Park, *Shamanism.*
[4] Ray, *Sanpoil and Nespelem*, pp. 169–211.
[5] That is, the name refers abstractly to the genus, not to a specific animal.

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quests for guardian spirits during the years immediately preceding puberty. Post-pubertal quests are never made. Many girls (twenty or thirty percent) likewise observe vigils. The visionary visits obscure spots, mountain tops, or bodies of water. He ordinarily carries an object given him by his proctor, an old man. This object is not symbolic but is to be deposited at the destination to prove his faithfulness to instructions. Activities during the night include constant alertness, building of rock piles, diving in water, and imitative activities such as "playing the stick game with the spirits."

The actual experience comes in a vision, or in a dream which is interpreted as a vision. The visionary is cautioned above all not to fall asleep or even interrupt activity for rest. But a youngster of tender age doubtless finds it difficult to comply to the letter with this interdiction. Yet he surely makes an attempt, for very early in life he learns that a successful spirit experience is indispensable to any valued achievement as an adult, indeed to avoid complete social insignificance. Now the psychological state most conducive to a vision is that semi-conscious condition just preceding actual sleep, or preceding actual awareness following awakening. Add to this the physical conditions inherent in the quest—nakedness; inclement weather (often); portentous sounds of the night; strange, spirit-infested surroundings where even adults would fear to tread; abnormal activity such as playing a game with a row of rocks which may at any moment come to life—and it is surprising that a quest ever fails to result in a vision.

The vision is of a highly formulated nature. The spirit, resembling a man, appears suddenly and speaks, asserting his friendliness and desire to help the visionary to a full adult life. He offers his supernatural help in certain activities and toward general good fortune and health. Before leaving he identifies himself, gives the suppliant a song and, less often, a dance step. The visionary reaches normal consciousness with the song ringing in his ears.

The boy or girl immediately returns home but does not reveal the outcome of the quest to anyone. Subsequent vigils are kept with the hope of adding to the number of one's tutelaries. The quests are brought to an end by puberty, whereupon all of the experiences are purposely "forgotten" and never recalled until the unsolicited reappearance of the spirits at maturity (twenty-five to thirty years of age). This repression for many years explains many aspects of the guardian spirit complex. By the time the spirit returns the individual has found his place in the

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776 community. His talents are known to himself and to others, and his
787 character likewise. The type of activity which is to predominate in his
869 life is usually fixed. None of these factors could have been determined by the person's guardian spirit experiences for they had not even been thought of since puberty. When recalled after this period of forced forgetting the details of the experiences are naturally, without conscious falsification, reconstructed to fit the situation in which the individual finds himself established. The true situation is probably this: the spirit or spirits do not return (are not recalled) until the person is firmly established in life.[6]

533 The return of one's spirit is marked by a feeling of lonesomeness
756 or despondency. A shaman "removes" or "captures" the spirit, holds
776 it to his ear to "hear" the song, and returns it to the patient. The song
787 is first sung, or started, by the shaman; the patient then sings alone. Shamans are thus indicated as the effective composers of spirit songs.[7]

The type of power one receives is not the result of a specific quest objective nor correlated with the particular spirit received. Any strong spirit is capable of supplying the help required for success in any activity, including shamanism. But some spirits are consistently weaker than others; these spirits seldom presume to convey shamanistic talents, and even in other activities the help given is limited in degree.

776 Among the Kutenai the above picture is considerably modified. The
787 range of spirits is even wider, including many inanimate objects and heavenly bodies, but not mythological characters. But these spirits appear in strikingly different form. For the most part they retain their animal-like appearance in contact with man, though to youths they may appear as young men or women. Spirits are generic or specific, the former predominating.

All boys and some girls observe the quest, but adults are also privileged to obtain power. Adults, however, are less frequently successful than youths. The Kutenai quest is not of a single night's duration, except rarely. The suppliant prolongs the quest until success is achieved. This seldom requires longer than seven days. If the pursuit proves wholly fruitless a second attempt may be made at a later time. Before departing on his quest, the vision-seeker is sometimes smudged

[6] Cf. Spier and Sapir, *Wishram Ethnography*, p. 238.

[7] This aligns with Radin's notion that shamans are the effective formalizers of religion in America (*Religion of the North American Indian*).

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over a fire of juniper. As among the Sanpoil, he receives an object to carry, but in this case it is highly symbolic. It represents a specific animal and aids in obtaining power from that animal. It is carried on a string around the neck and only occasionally deposited at the destination. Usually it is kept throughout life.

As suggested by the use of the symbol, particular spirits are often sought, the selection being made by the father. The spirit chosen is not uniformly one of those possessed by the parent, however. This links with specific statements that spirits are not hereditary. Further, a particular spirit always conveys a specific type of power. This suggests that in effect the search is directed toward a type of power rather than a specific spirit. It also indicates a wide divergence from the Sanpoil pattern.

Throughout the quest a fast is maintained. This parallels Sanpoil practice but the functional significance is slight in the latter case because of the brief duration. The Kutenai suppliant visits a definite spirit locale in the mountains or on the prairie but does not pile rocks except at the one spot where success is achieved. Diving in lakes is practiced with the definite anticipation of finding a spirit below. Caves are used for shelter and sought as possible spirit locales.

The Kutenai vision pattern exhibits several new elements. The experience may come in either a dream or a vision. The spirit, in the guise of animal or youth, appears, disappears, and reappears in various quarters. The conversation is less formalized than with the Sanpoil but instructions are given and promises made. A song is invariably conferred. Indeed, in some cases the spirit does not appear at all; only a song is heard. In this event the song conveys the nature of the power and the identity of the spirit. The spirit, or the song, is conceived as actually entering the visionary's body at a particular spot, causing a sort of hypnotism. Thenceforward the spot is sacred. When the individual wishes help he taps the spot and thus calls his guardian. To others the spot is tabu. Actual communion with the spirit is infrequent subsequent to the quest, but upon such occasions the spirit carries his charge back to the site of first contact.

The song is all important and all-sufficient to the experience. No dance step, animal cry, nor symbol is given to the visionary.

Unsought reception of spirit power is frequent among the Kutenai, not rare as with the Sanpoil. It is not essential that such power be accepted.

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The pattern of forgetting the spirit until maturity is entirely foreign to the Kutenai. The power apparently is effective from the moment of the experience. However, the nature of the experience and identity of the spirit are never revealed in words, not even upon the death bed. Disclosure would bring death. Of course the identity is guessed by others through the talents displayed.

The Kutenai do not seek more than one spirit, for power cannot thereby be multiplied. Informants ambiguously state that "one spirit carries the power (not the talents) of all." This may imply that the degree of spiritual power possessed by any man is more or less a constant, the avenue of utilization being restricted by the identity of the spirit. But it is difficult to reconcile the further declaration that certain spirits are more powerful than others. However, this may merely mean that shamanistic utilization of power is more potent than secular exploitation.

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The picture presented by the Lower Carrier differs both in many details and in general form. Only a few boys and even fewer girls seek spirit power. Adults may obtain power but acquisition during early years is more common. As among the Kutenai, the father often selects the spirit to be sought (except that the eldest son makes his own choice) but the spirit desired is not always achieved and the nature of the power conveyed is not uniformly consistent.

The seeker of lay power keeps daytime vigils for a period of a month while the aspirant to shamanism seeks power each night for a year. In each case the intervening hours, day or night, are spent at home, and wandering is restricted to the immediate vicinity. This may appear to be a partial parallel to Sanpoil practice but the resemblance is only apparent, not real. It is the pattern of the vision that proves this.

In the vision pattern two aspects stand out with a prominence which overshadows all else in the complex. First, the "vision" is a dream, or rather a series of dreams, which form both the soul and substance of the concept. Secondly, these dreams are initiated only through the agency of a proctor.

To the south we have seen an old man or parent in a minimal role of proctor, supervising and instructing the suppliant, but the latter always enters upon the quest alone and achieves success only through his own initiative. In contrast the Carrier visionary assumes a distinctly passive role and success depends upon the power and knowledge

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of the proctor.[8] The objective differs also; power or spirit guardianship as such are not sought. It is the ability to dream at will that is desired. A vague store of power is never conveyed, nor is the possession of a spirit of any efficacy in itself. A man can call supernatural power into play for his advantage only through dreaming. And if this power is to be available at critical moments the ability to dream at will must be possessed. Thus the real measure of success in the spirit quest is not the identity of the spirit nor the nature of the power, but the degree to which dreams become volitional.

The ability to dream is achieved by the proctor sleeping with the suppliant under a blanket symbolic of the power sought. The bed is usually made in the sweat house and the vigils begin at about ten years of age. As noted above, lay power comes through sleeping in the daytime, but shamanistic power is achieved at night. The shamanistic aspirant may sleep in the sweat house, but often he goes to a cremation place. This is not that he may receive an ancestral spirit, but that he may come in close contact with the forces of life and death and the influences of deceased shamans. The latter often become the visionary's temporary proctors, so that he may sleep in fact alone and yet not in effect be alone. Often he "awakens" with a start to find himself high on a mountain top or in some other distant spot. But the spirits who carried him there also return him to the original spot.

For the lay seeker, sleeping does not occupy the entire day. Other activities include sweating, massaging with spruce boughs, bathing, and wandering about. This wandering is accomplished in a trance which makes the visionary unaware of his actions or his path.

The vigils are ended and success ascertained through sleeping with a shaman. Up to this point the proctor is ordinarily the child's father. If the shaman awakens suddenly and jumps up shouting, success is indicated. Otherwise the quest is prolonged. Spirits themselves are highly restricted both in number and type. Only a few animals function and even fewer birds and insects. Natural phenomena and heavenly

[8] In discussing puberty fasting among the Ojibwa, Radin makes certain general observations concerning the spirit quest which are pertinent here. He evaluates the importance of the parent or proctor in determining the nature of the spirit experience. He also discusses the degree to which the experience is reinterpreted in later years: "The dream experience formula probably does not exist at the time of fasting in any clearly defined form, but it probably represents the increasing influence of the cultural environment, and the knowledge of those details of the fast that he learns from the generation of his parents and grandparents, as he grows older" (*Some Aspects of Puberty Fasting*, pp. 75–78).

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bodies are not uncommon. Fabricated objects may serve, but not other inanimate things. The spirits always appear in "true" or animal form, but may have certain human characteristics. The conceptual nature and generic source of shamanistic power do not differ from lay power, but both the quest and the spirits are specialized. The details of one's quest dreams and the identity of one's spirits are never disclosed, though the proctor knows, of course, and one's activities provide clues.

Among other bands of the Carrier the above practices are varied somewhat. Jenness provides the following instructive remarks:

> Carrier Indians to the eastward, at Fraser Lake and beyond, made every youth seek an animal protector or guardian spirit, and taught him how he might gain it. Night after night during the summer months the youth wandered away alone or in company with another to sleep in solitude on a hillside, or beside a lake or a river, where an unbroken silence promoted dreaming and the contact of his shadow with the world of animals. The weirder or more dangerous his sleeping-place the more hope he entertained of achieving his quest. Some youths therefore slept on boughs overhanging the water, or hung, head downward over a rock-slide, secured from falling by a thong around one leg; some slept in graveyards, which the Indians tended to avoid on other occasions. Not every dream betokened a significant visitation from the animal world, but only a dream so vivid that it printed itself indelibly on the memory. Then the bird, the fish, or the animal so revealed became the youth's guardian spirit, which he could summon to his aid in time of crises. . . .
>
> At Fraser Lake and Stoney Creek . . . the Indians conceived that most youths were unsuccessful in their quest, that only a favored few obtained guardian spirits, and that these few became the medicine-men able to cure diseases and foresee the future. . . .
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> The lay Indian (as well as the shaman) did not cease to dream, or to believe that his dreams opened up contact with the spiritual world and thereby brought him substantial benefits. If he was swift of foot his swiftness came from dreams in which he seemed to pursue and overtake the fleeting caribou; if unusually successful in his salmon fishing his success came from dreaming about the salmon; for even the layman's dreams gave him power to accomplish whatever the dream signified.
>
> [One of Jenness' informants furnished this telling anecdote:] "I have never dreamed a great deal, so I have never been a very successful hunter. One season I caught a beaver, not in the jaws of the trap, but with the chain, which became wound round the animal's legs. I do not know why this should have happened, because I have seldom dreamed about the beaver, and never of catching a beaver in that unusual manner."[9]

[9] Jenness, *Carrier Religion.*

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This suggests another aspect of the Lower Carrier pattern. The visionary dreams of many animals, though only one or a few prove to be those he can subsequently recall in dreams. Regardless of the tutelary received, the final dream of the quest series is of the grizzly bear.

The Cultural Role

The descriptions above are deficient in at least one respect. They convey no dependable notion of the significance of each concept in relation to the rest of the culture, or the degree to which the concept molds and influences daily life. There are clues, it is true. The Kutenai and the Sanpoil require universal participation of males in the quest whereas but few of the Lower Carrier take part, many of whom at least partially fail. On the other hand, the dramatic nature of the Carrier quest is impressive, but the venture occupies only a month or a year of a man's life.

Upon first contact with the Sanpoil I was deeply impressed both by the intensity of the role played by the guardian spirit and by the extent to which it influenced the culture. Naturally I was uncertain whether this impression was the result of a relatively greater emphasis by the Sanpoil, or merely reflected my own ignorance of Plateau culture. The latter might well have been the case, but after long contact with Plateau peoples I feel more strongly than ever that the group of cultures typified by the Sanpoil represent the high point of the area in this respect. In another place I have expressed my convictions as follows:

> Perhaps nowhere in America did the guardian spirit concept play so great a role in the lives of a people as among the Salishan groups of the [American] Plateau. . . . Not only was the guardian spirit idea highly developed here as a formal religious complex in which very nearly every man participated, but that participation was no passive acquiescence to cultural tradition. It was rather an intense identification highly charged with emotional content. . . . Here spirits were ever present. A man and his tutelary led parallel existences; the one had only to reach out, so to speak, and draw the other to him when the occasion made unitary action or cooperation desirable. The power inherent in the guardian spirit was not, in other words, a talent once conferred and thereafter effective, or a vague store of energy to be drawn upon when needed; but rather a highly specific relationship with a powerful ally available for personal action in any exigency. . . .
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> In everyday life this intimacy of relationship was reflected in countless references to one's own or another's tutelary, and in the invariable explanation

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with that of central and southern Plateau groups. An observation by Jenness is to the point:

> Nevertheless, [Carrier] dreams were so erratic, visitations from the animal world so ungovernable, that no Indian hunter cared to stake all his fortunes upon them. He believed that in ancient days the animals themselves had delivered to him a powerful weapon by disclosing certain "medicines" and rituals that would deliver the game into his hands.[11]

(The latter belief is unknown to the south.)

One last example may illuminate the judgements above. Olson writes, "Nothing bulked larger in Quinault life than the acquisition and control of supernatural power."[12] Now it is certain that the Lower Chinook gave spiritual power greater emphasis than did the Quinault. Further, the Chinook

> quest differed very slightly from that of the Plateau. Even though an interior group as far distant as the Kalispel of northern Idaho be taken for comparison, the quest exhibits no significant difference; while even minor details are impressively similar.[13]

Yet it would never occur to me to equate the *functional intensity* of the Chinook concept and that of the Kalispel, the former is so much the slighter.

Conceptual Factors

For introduction I may refer to the quotation above in which the role of the spirit guardian and helper is discussed and the colloquialism "my partner" is mentioned.

The expression "my power" is also frequently heard among the English speaking natives of the central Plateau. The two terms "partner" and "power" seem to be used interchangeably. On the other hand the natives seldom or never speak of "spirits" or of "spirit power." Nor do they say "partner power." These English speaking habits have led to considerable confusion and have obscured the point made above. Cline, for example, states of the Southern Okanogan that "One's guardian spirit dwelt somewhere in the woods or mountains, and came to him when he thought of it or needed its aid," a formulation corresponding exactly to that given above. But he also says,

[11] Jenness, *op. cit.*
[12] Olson, *Quinault Indians*, p. 141.
[13] Ray, *Historical Position*, p. 370.

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> Though one's power was something quite distinct from his soul, the Okanagon believed, in a vague way, that it resided inside him, perhaps in his chest or in his heart. . . . The "spirit" was perhaps the guardian spirit in animal or other guise, as opposed to the formless potency which one had obtained from it and which abided within him.[14]

Do the Southern Okanogan really make this unusual distinction? The answer may be sought in the terminology of the native language. The term su·mi'x (Southern Okanogan) is used, with dialectical variations, throughout the region as the sole term for the designation of the guardian spirit or the power associated with the spirit. In the translation of native texts the interpreter sometimes translates su·mi'x as "power," sometimes as "partner," and when he learns the ethnologist's term spirit, he adds that to the variants. But to the naïve informant the term spirit usually, if not always, calls up the notion of ghost or soul rather than guardian. But I have never encountered the slightest conceptual confusion between guardian spirit and soul anywhere in the Plateau. Spier states of the Klamath, "Souls and ghosts are separate entities, and again are sharply distinct from spirits."[15] The Sanpoil, like certain other Plateau groups, locate the soul near the heart or thereabouts, but nowhere in the entire area is the spirit conceived as residing in the body. Even among the Kutenai, where the spirit enters the body during the vision, it immediately leaves and must be called back when needed. Therefore it appears certain that Cline is confusing informants' statements regarding the soul and the spirit, when, in the statements above, he distinguishes between spirit and power and localizes the latter in the body.[16]

This is not to deny that distinctions between spirit and power exist in parts of the Plateau, or that power or talents are not conferred which are effective without constant spirit presence. The Klamath do not receive guardians that serve as familiars, but merely derive abiding power from a supernatural experience involving a spirit. Spier observes that

> The Klamath concept apparently holds for all tribes of the Pacific coast. There does not appear anywhere the Plains type of quest for particular sanctions. The spirits of the experiences are not guardians, they are not invoked (save by shamans), and they give continuing powers to perform the arts or professions or for success and wealth.[17]

[14] Cline, *Southern Okanogan*, p. 133.
[15] Spier, *Klamath Ethnography*, p. 100.
[16] The distinction between soul and spirit is further discussed below.
[17] Spier, *Klamath Ethnography*, p. 250.

The specific sanction is unknown even to the Plains-like Kutenai or Flathead. But the generalization concerning invoked guardians does not hold for a great part of the Plateau. Specific and necessary invocation is practiced by the Tenino, Umatilla, Coeur d'Alêne, Flathead; the Kutenai, Sanpoil, Southern Okanogan (see above); and the Shuswap. Among the Carrier the spirit reappears throughout life in dreams. In the other groups the spirit is recalled in a formalized manner, often by singing. Among the Lillooet, Thompson, and Chilcotin the notion seems to be more that of continuing talents. The latter have undoubtedly been influenced by the Coast. Four distinct patterns emerge: sanctions, limited to the Plains; inherent power, typical of the Coast and penetrating to the Klamath; volitional dreams, perhaps typical of the Mackenzie Basin; and invocation of ever-present spirits, unquestionably typical of the Plateau.

A related matter demands consideration. The Plateau notion is not that spirits cannot be identified with man or enter man's body; but rather that such identification or intrusion is unusual, the common condition being that of separate existences. Intrusion during the vision appears unique to the Kutenai, though the hypnotism or unconsciousness accompanying visions of the Tenino, Klikitat, and Umatilla may be the result of intrusion or possession. More probably, however, it is the strength of the power that causes the reaction. These groups, far removed from the Kutenai, are contiguous and open to influences from the Coast where violent reactions are thus interpreted.

Intrusion of another's spirit is recognized as a definite cause of disease by the Tenino, Wishram, Klikitat, Umatilla, Kittitas, Wenatchi, Sanpoil, Kalispel, Coeur d'Alêne, Flathead, and Lower Thompson. To the north of the Thompson the spirit is the agent causing the intrusion of an object. This is exactly the Klamath notion. The intrusive spirit, then, uniformly characterizes the central and southern Plateau, except the Klamath. It may be considered typical of the Plateau, though not exclusive to it. The Chinook share the concept, possibly borrowed from the Klikitat or Wishram, but it is not known among the Quinault, the Tillamook, or coastal tribes to the south.[18]

A further type of spirit intrusion or possession is that occurring upon the return of the spirit at maturity after an absence following

[18] Spier and Sapir, *Wishram Ethnography*, p. 244; Spier, *Klamath Ethnography*, p. 122; Olson, *Quinault Indians*, pp. 141 ff.; Barnett, *Oregon Coast*, pp. 188–91.

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acquisition. This appears to have been a local development among the Sanpoil, Kalispel, and perhaps the Southern Okanogan.[19] The spirit possesses the person, must be removed and "brought under control" by a shaman, then rubbed back onto the person to reëstablish the relationship but not to remain there. This procedure is undoubtedly related to the Thompson and Lillooet practice of rubbing on a spirit retrieved after being lost and the Kittitas and Wenatchi custom in which a shaman may seize a wandering spirit and rub it into one of his sons.

The identification which forms the basis of the Bluejay complex[20] constitutes a final significant example of coincidence of man and spirit.

Objective Elements

From conceptual factors we may turn to certain features of somewhat greater objectivity for further historic perspective. The duration of the quest has been mentioned above. One night vigils characterize the south central Plateau (Tenino, Wishram, Umatilla, Klikitat, Kittitas, Wenatchi, Southern Okanogan, Sanpoil, Coeur d'Alêne, Kalispel) and the Flathead. The Nez Percé and Klamath vigils continue for five days; this may be due to coastal influence. In the Canadian Plateau extended quests are the rule with durations as follow: Kutenai, one to seven days; Shuswap, three days plus; Thompson, four to eight days; Lillooet, two days to one year; Chilcotin, four days; Carrier, each day for thirty days. Extended quests are occasionally observed by the Umatilla and more often by the Kalispel. These data fall into three patterns: one night for the south central Plateau; several days for the Canadian Plateau and margins of the southern area; and consecutive daily vigils for a definite period, the Carrier form.[21]

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The association of the spirit quest with a formal training period for youths, or puberty observances, is found in the southern area of the Canadian Plateau, but not beyond. The general type is described by Teit for the Thompson[22] but it is the Lillooet who carry it to the extreme in duration. The combined spirit-seeking and training for the profession of shaman requires eight to nine years, during which only frequent visits home are made. The training includes sleeping in a

[19] Cline, *Southern Okanogan*, p. 142.

[20] See below; see Ray, *Bluejay Character*.

[21] Spier and Sapir, *Wishram Ethnography*, p. 240; Cline, *Southern Okanogan*, p. 138; Spinden, *Nez Percé Indians*, p. 248; Spier, *Klamath Ethnography*, p. 95; Teit, *Shuswap*, p. 588; Teit, *Thompson Indians*, p. 318.

[22] Teit, *Thompson Indians*, pp. 317–21.

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appears to be a local development much influenced by Coast ritualism. The age at which a guardian spirit may be acquired varies considerably through the Plateau. Several patterns may be isolated: pre-puberty (minimum age, six to ten years); puberty (range of two or three years); post-puberty (terminated by maturity); and middle age. A practice limited to the Southern Okanogan admits children of three to six years to the quest. In no group may elderly persons hope for success. The periods are not in all cases mutually exclusive. Another aspect which must be considered is the recognition of one period or circumstance as more favorable than another. Two categories are prominent: puberty and periods of crises. Data are scarce on the latter point and little can be added to Spier's discussion, except that recognition of crises as significant by the Klamath appears unique in the American Plateau.[23]

The pre-puberty quest as the exclusive form is noted for the Wishram, Tenino, Klikitat, Kittitas, Wenatchi ("virgins only"), Southern Okanogan ("almost always"), Sanpoil, Coeur d'Alêne, and Nez Percé (?),[24] that is, the south central area. Those recognizing prepuberty as the principal or most favorable period, but not wholly excluding later quests, include the Klamath, Umatilla, Flathead, and Kutenai, all marginal groups. The Canadian Salish constitute a third distinct group, in which puberty is the initial and most favorable time but later quests are not infrequent. Only among the Chilcotin is a premium placed upon middle age as a time for acquiring power. This is undoubtedly linked with the prolonged dreaming of the Carrier.

Throughout the Plateau a wide range of spirits serve as guardians. The Chilcotin share this trait to a limited degree but the Carrier do not. Regional specialization is to be seen, however. Inanimate objects play an important role only among the Kutenai, Kalispel, Shuswap, Thompson, and possibly Lillooet, a continuous distribution undoubtedly representing local elaboration of a more widespread notion.[25] The occurrence of mythological beings as guardian spirits forms an interesting distribution, for the source of the concept is unquestionably the Coast, where it is often the type. The instances are all on the Columbia River,

[23] Spier, *Klamath Ethnography*, p. 94.

[24] Spier and Sapir, *Wishram Ethnography*, p. 239; Cline, *Southern Okanogan*, p. 137; Spinden, *Nez Percé Indians*, pp. 248–50.

[25] Teit, *Lillooet Indians*, p. 238; cf. Park, *Shamanism*, pp. 76 f.

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or tributaries, which clearly indicates the route of diffusion: Wishram, Tenino, Klikitat, Kittitas, Southern Okanogan, and Coeur d'Alêne.[26] The distribution of dwarfs as tutelaries is identical (except possibly for the Southern Okanogan) but hardly coincidental. My data bear out Park's observation that a belief in dwarfs is more widespread than their occurrence as guardians.[27] In addition to the group mentioned above, dwarfs are known to the Sanpoil, Wenatchi, Flathead, Shuswap, and Carrier.

Spirits whose normal form is anthropomorphic are infrequent except for the dwarfs. But not only anthropomorphic but human spirits are declared to be recognized by the Thompson and, by implication, the Shuswap.[28] But the guise in which spirits appear to human beings is uniformly anthropomorphic among all Plateau peoples with the following exceptions. The marginal Kutenai and the Kalispel recognize both animal and human guise while the Carrier and Chilcotin spirits appear only in animal or half-human form. The animal guise may be typical of the Mackenzie area; it is specifically the Sekani pattern. But it is probably more widespread, especially southward into the Plains.[29] This would explain the Kalispel-Kutenai compromise. Since the dominant spirits of the Coast, mythological beings, are fundamentally anthropomorphic in form, the Plateau stands out as a unit in recognizing animal spirits which assume anthropomorphic form in contact with man.

Park treats as one the concepts of power derived from ghosts and that derived from spirits of dead relatives.[30] This is not justified in the Plateau. A brief digression is necessary to explain.

During life, the guardian spirit and its possessor are clearly distinguished as two distinct entities; this has been pointed out above. A third entity, the soul, is conceptually distinct from these two and materially distinct from the spirit; indeed, wholly unrelated to it. On the other hand, the soul is inextricably linked with the material human body in a physical way; it is the animating force in the body. Separation of the two entails immediate death or serious illness followed by death if

[26] Spier, *Klamath Ethnography*, p. 245; Spier and Sapir, *Wishram Ethnography*, pp. 236 f.; Cline, *Southern Okanogan*, pp. 135 f.

[27] Park, *Shamanism*, pp. 78 f.

[28] Contrary to Park (*Shamanism*, p. 77); Teit, *Thompson Indians*, p. 354; Teit, *Shuswap*, p. 605.

[29] Jenness, *Sekani Indians*, pp. 68–70; Benedict, *Vision in Plains Culture*, pp. 12 ff.

[30] Park, *Shamanism*, p. 79.

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775 776 the two are not soon reunited. The soul is conceived as being located somewhere within the body; the Sanpoil localize it near the heart but it is not identified with that organ; the Canadian Salish believe it to be situated in the head.

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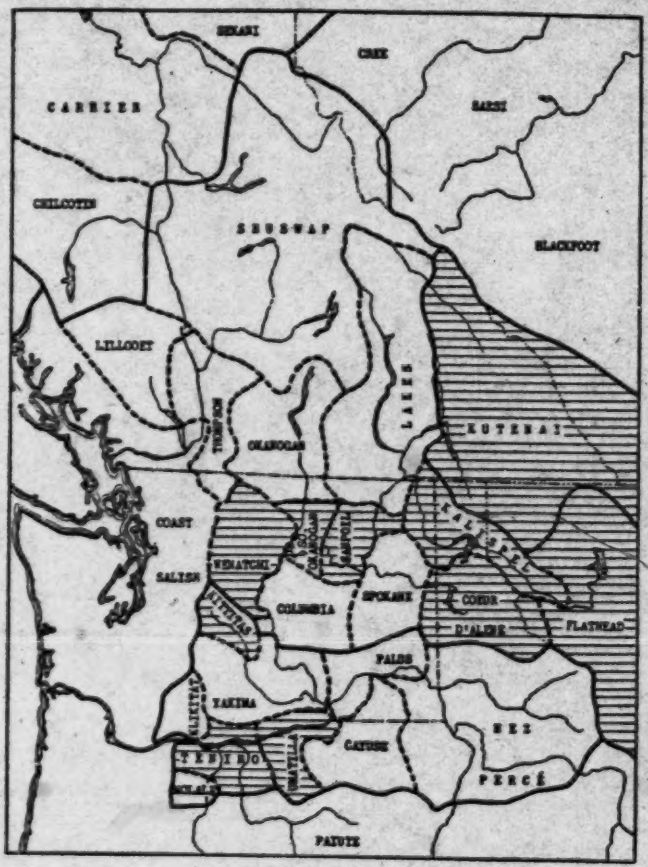

MAP 8. The spirit-ghost concept.

775 776 Now upon death the soul and body are separated. The body disintegrates, ceases to exist; but the soul becomes transformed into the ghost (unless it immediately goes to the land of the dead) and continues to exist. Its form may be pseudo-anthropomorphic or, at the other extreme, flame-like or bone-like.

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At the same time any one of several things may happen to the guardian spirit which the deceased possessed. It may return to its genus; it may disappear; or it may become non-existent. Each of these alternatives is found in western America. But there is still another possibility: the guardian spirit may "die" likewise and become transformed into a ghost—a "spirit-ghost." This is exactly what happens among some peoples of the Plateau. To them it is inconceivable that an entity so intimately associated with man as his guardian spirit should not undergo a major transformation upon his death. As suggested, this transformation follows the pattern of the soul: the soul becomes the ghost; the guardian spirit becomes the spirit-ghost. It is not felt that the "soul" of the guardian spirit becomes the spirit-ghost. Since the guardian spirit is an ethereal rather than a material entity, transformation may be direct; a "spirit-soul" concept is not a logical necessity. The change from guardian spirit to spirit-ghost is nevertheless equally as radical as that from soul to ghost. Regardless of the original identity of the spirit, its after-death form is anthropomorphic.

This type picture is derived from the Sanpoil, but is modified to present a fairly general idea of the concept throughout the area. The concept is known to be present among the Kittitas, Umatilla, Wenatchi, Southern Okanogan, Sanpoil, Kalispel, Coeur d'Alêne, Flathead, Kutenai, and probably Tenino (absent: Klikitat).[31] The center is clearly the Sanpoil-Southern Okanogan; outward from here the concept fades in complexity and integration. (The spirit-ghost, as a source of power, is further discussed below in connection with the inheritance of spirits.)

We may now return to the question of power derived from ghosts. First of all, it is obvious, in the light of the above facts, that power from ghosts is a very different thing from power derived from the spirits of dead relatives. In the former case the transformed soul, the *human ghost*, would serve as a *spirit;* in the latter instance the *non-human guardian spirit* or *non-human spirit-ghost* would serve as a *spirit*.

As a matter of fact, nowhere in the Plateau is there an unequivocal case of spiritual power derived from the ghosts of human beings. It is true that the Lillooet shamanistic aspirant keeps about him the bones of dead men but these are merely symbolic of his control over death and ability to visit the land of the dead. The Carrier suppliant may sleep at a cremation place for the same reason, or even to learn by occult

[31] Ray, *Sanpoil and Nespelem*, pp. 173–76; Cline, *Southern Okanagon*, pp. 153 f.

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means the secrets of dead shamans. But even here the shaman's ghost does not become his guardian nor supply him with spiritual power. Teit states that

> among the Lower Thompsons a shaman who desired to obtain a dead person for his guardian spirit placed a skull in front of his private sweat-house, and danced and sang around it. . . . He sang and prayed to the soul of the deceased person to whom the skull belonged to impart to him the desired knowledge.[32]

Dancing around the skull is typical procedure for the purposes indicated above; valuable *knowledge* quite distinct from *spiritual power* may be obtained by singing and praying as indicated. But I could get no corroboration from the Lower Thompson for the ghost as a spirit. Furthermore, when Teit lists specified shamanistic spirits he mentions many *objects* connected with death, all of which fit perfectly into the pattern: lodge and poles at grave, heaps of rocks at graves, dead man's hair, bones, and teeth; also the land of the dead. Teit speaks in a similar vein of Lillooet beliefs.[33] There is a further possible explanation for this apparent aberration. It may be that the spirit-ghost is confused with the human ghost. Spirit-ghosts and ghosts are not always distinguishable in their ethereal forms. There is undoubtedly often confusion in the minds of natives as to whether the figure in a particular anecdote is a soul-ghost or a spirit-ghost.[34]

Among most Plateau groups vague distinctions are made between stronger and weaker spirits, safe and dangerous ones. But nowhere are these distinctions consistent even from one group to the next. True specialization of spirits, on the other hand, is specific in distribution and clear in conception. At one extreme is the belief that a particular spirit invariably conveys a particular type of power; at the other, any spirit is capable of conferring any type of power, strength permitting. Again we find the south central Plateau forming a unit, with belief in non-specialization (Klikitat, Kittitas, Wenatchi, Sanpoil, Coeur d'Alêne, Kalispel; also Flathead). Groups recognizing specialization in some cases, or modified specialization, are marginal to the above (Klamath, Wishram, Tenino, Umatilla, Nez Percé, Southern Okanogan).[35] Among the Salish to the north a more rigid specialization is the

[32] Teit, *Thompson Indians*, p. 354.
[33] Teit, *loc. cit.*; Teit, *Lillooet Indians*, p. 287.
[34] Ray, *Sanpoil and Nespelem*, p. 174; see below.
[35] Spier, *Klamath Ethnography*, pp. 103, 122 f.; Spier and Sapir, *Wishram Ethnography*,

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rule, but it is weaker among the Shuswap than others. This may be due to contact with the Carrier, where the question is hardly a pertinent one (see above), but specialization is not characteristic. The Kutenai stand alone in assuming that spirits are specialized and yet that a man may obtain only one.

Since particularized powers characterize the Coast it seems obvious that we are dealing with but two centers, the Coast and the south central Plateau. Coastal influences up the Fraser Valley may well account for the specialization there, while less direct trans-Cascade diffusion plus marginal variation may be inferred in the other cases. This assumes that *non-specialization* is a positive element. I think this must be granted; it is obvious when expressed correctly but awkwardly, "Any spirit may grant any power." Specialization of spirits must not be confused with the granting of specialized talents, a universal feature in the Plateau.

Not unrelated to the above is intentional search for a specific spirit, or any of a group of spirits conferring similar power. One might surmise that the intentional search would be coextensive with specialized spirits. This is exactly the case at the extremes. Groups with modified specialization align with those lacking it: quest objectives are indefinite. In speaking of definite objectives as lacking it is not implied that blessings of a general nature—good luck, health, wealth—are not sought and expected.[36] This brings into relief an aspect of the spirit concept often overlooked. Favors of two kinds are invariably conveyed throughout the Plateau: general good fortune and a specific talent. It is the latter which may or may not be specialized according to spirit identity. One further note: in the area where specific objectives are absent, they are only *formally* lacking. The youth undoubtedly harbors secret desires in many cases. Indeed, this surely accounts for the specific nature of many a vision.

The inheritance of spirits is a knotty problem since the interpretations of inheritance are numerous. A spirit may be strictly hereditary in the lineage, perhaps unilaterally. This system prevails on the Coast north of the Quinault, resulting in some cases in "spirit quests" that are merely empty forms for ritualistic purposes.[37] Heredity of this

p. 237; cf. Park, *Shamanism*, p. 86; Cline, *Southern Okanagon*, pp. 133 ff.; Spinden, *Nez Percé Indians*, p. 249.

[36] Cf. Spier, *Klamath Ethnography*, p. 95.

[37] E.g., Boas, *Social Organization and Secret Societies*, pp. 503 ff.

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kind is unknown in the Plateau. But frequently a man instructs one of his spirits to appear to his son or presents the boy with a symbol which will aid in obtaining a specific spirit. This is not merely a vague reflection of the coastal pattern of heredity, for in the latter case, at least,

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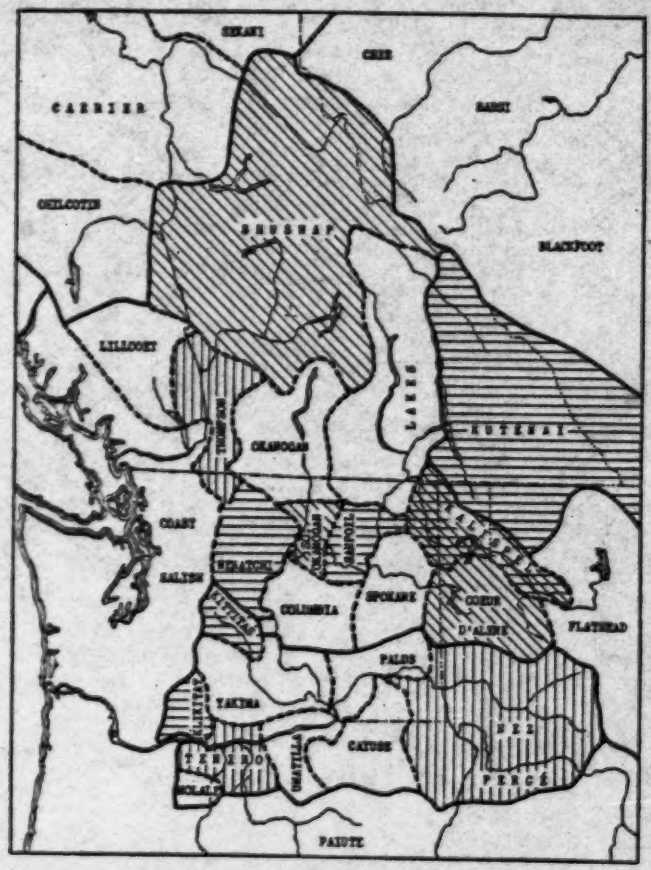

MAP 9. Inheritance of guardian spirits. *Vertical hatching:* true inheritance; *horizontal hatching:* upon instruction only; *diagonal hatching:* transference by use of symbol.

the father often selects a symbol unrepresentative of any of his own spirits. Furthermore, an unrelated person, an elderly shaman or merely a proctor, may send out his spirit to be found or may provide the symbol. The pattern of so instructing one's own spirit typifies the south

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central area (Klikitat, Kittitas, Wenatchi, Sanpoil, Kalispel, Kutenai). It is lacking for the Klamath, Wishram (?), Southern Okanogan, Flathead, and Canadian Plateau. The distribution is mutually exclusive of that of transmission by means of a symbol (Southern Okanogan,[38] Coeur d'Alêne, Kalispel, Shuswap; not Lillooet, Flathead) except for the Kalispel where the practices seem to reflect amalgamation. Neither of these concepts appears typical of any adjacent area; they may, therefore be considered local developments with the Canadian-American areas once more contrasted in specific trait identity though the continuity of distribution argues for a general relation of the two concepts.

Certain of the groups lacking both traits do, nevertheless, possess a more specific notion of inheritance. These are the very ones most intimately associated with the Coast (Klamath, Tenino, Thompson), plus the Nez Percé, the "Plains tribe" which shows upon close analysis many coastal features undoubtedly received via the Columbia-Snake route. Among the Tenino, according to Murdock, "guardian spirits are transmitted by a parent of either sex to an own child of either sex —but by or to no one else—at the winter shamanistic performances."[39] The absence of heredity among the Wishram may actually represent only absence of data. Altogether these cases support Spier's contention that even minimal reflection of true inheritance points to a coastal origin.[40]

And yet the case is not closed. All the southern examples, with the exception of the Tenino, may actually involve the spirit-ghost concept. The fundamentals of this idea were given above. When a man possessing a guardian spirit dies, not only does his soul become a ghost, but his guardian spirit may undergo a similar transformation and become a spirit-ghost. The spirit-ghost lacks almost completely its former characteristics; even its generic name is dropped. Instead it refers to itself (in communion with man) by the term for spirit-ghost or a *relationship term designating the person who before death possessed it*. The spirit-ghost, *in the guise of the deceased*, appears to a person in a dream or vision and seeks acceptance as a secondary power. That person is usually but not invariably a relative. This commonly happens within a year after the death of the spirit's owner. The spirit-ghost speaks to the dreamer in the following tenor: "I am your father (or friend). I

[38] Cline, *Southern Okanagon*, pp. 137 f.
[39] Murdock, personal correspondence.
[40] Spier, *Klamath Ethnography*, pp. 247–49.

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want you to imitate me. I'll do good for you if you will do good for me. I'm lost now and I want you for my partner." The one addressed is not privileged to reject the proposal without becoming seriously ill. Acceptance, too, involves unavoidable illness unless one's former power be greater than that which he is to receive from the spirit-ghost. The illness is similar to that caused by the first return of an ordinary spirit, but more intense. A shaman must be called, who removes the spirit-ghost, brings it under control, and returns it to the patient. Thereafter its power is available for use in much the same manner as ordinary spirit power.[41]

It seems highly probable that some, at least, of the cases of "inheritance" are actually of this order. This pattern, slightly modified, fits Klamath inheritance perfectly. The Klamath shaman's "spirits and clairvoyant powers are released by his death and must go to someone else. If his relatives keep his pipe or other paraphernalia about, it is certain that his spirits will come to one of them."[42]

To a slight extent the Shuswap share the belief and it is entirely possible that Teit's statements concerning power derived from ghosts is the result of the confusion of the soul-ghost and the spirit-ghost. The Chilcotin lack the concept, as do the Carrier. But among the latter a shaman may sometimes effect the transfer of a spirit from a father to his son.

The spirit-ghost notion indeed involves inheritance and may be built upon a generalized concept borrowed from the Coast. But it is certainly cast in a Plateau mold and centers well to the interior. It is surely significant that the transfer is not always to a relative (Kalispel, Kutenai) and that it may be "given" by the patient to the attending shaman or wholly discarded (Tenino, Umatilla, Southern Okanogan,[43] Sanpoil).

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One of the profoundest points of distinction in the spirit concept is the mode of reception, whether by true vision, or dream, or a combination of the two. I have pointed out above that the experience may take place in a half-waking (or half-sleeping) state and yet be culturally classified as definitely dream, or definitely vision. Since the problem

[41] Description based on the Sanpoil pattern; among certain other groups the illness is less severe or absent.

[42] Spier, *Klamath Ethnography*, p. 97.

[43] Cline, *Southern Okanogan*, p. 153.

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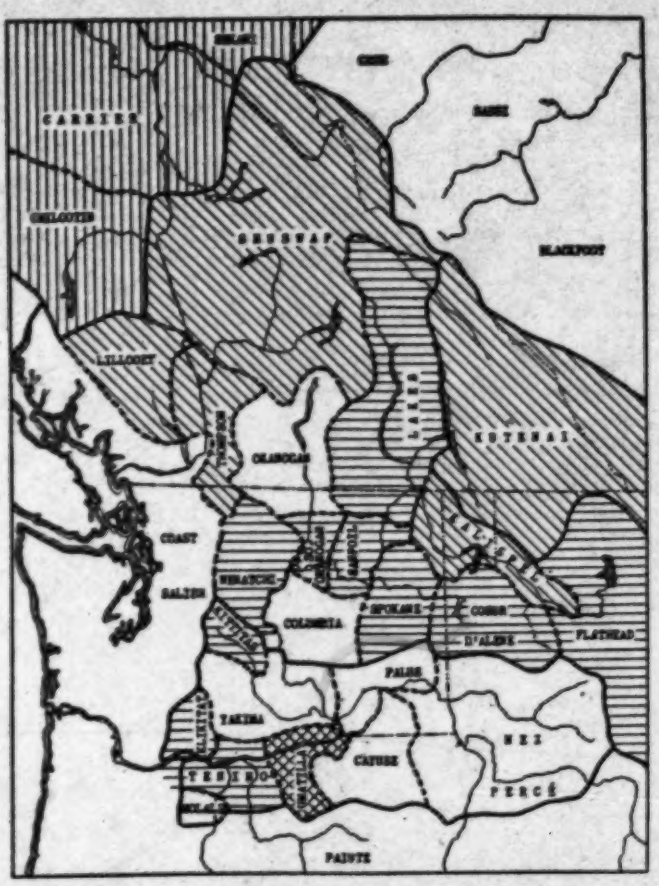
here is rather more historical than psychological, the classification of the native will be used regardless of other factors. Spier and Park have tackled this problem for regions to the south.[44] The data here will merely provide a northern extension. Among the Umatilla, not far



MAP 10. Types of quest experience. *Horizontal hatching:* vision only; *diagonal hatching:* vision, induced dream; *vertical hatching:* voluntary dream; *cross hatching:* vision, dream (involuntary?).

north of the Klamath, the pattern of the latter is maintained. That is, both the vision and dream are present. It is not certain that the particular phrasing is that of the Klamath, a quest followed by a dream

[44] Spier, *Klamath Ethnography*, pp. 250 ff.; Park, *Shamanism*, pp. 108 ff.

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776/787 upon return. In the south central Plateau the vision is exclusively found (Tenino, Wishram, Klikitat, Kittitas, Wenatchi, Southern Okanogan, Sanpoil, Coeur d'Alêne, Flathead).[45] In the Canadian Plateau the presence of both dream and vision is encountered once more (Kutenai, Kalispel, Shuswap, Thompson, Lillooet). This recurrence becomes intelligible when the Athabascan pattern is examined. The dream is exclusive for the Carrier and typical if not exclusive for the Chilcotin and Sekani.[46] The dream in the north, however, is not the involuntary dream of California, the Southwest, and the Klamath (also Umatilla ?) but a dream induced by highly formal means (see above). The involuntary dream conferring spirit-ghost power in the American Plateau has been confused with the spirit dream.[47] It is conceivable, but doubtful, that involuntary dreaming, as a separable pattern, indicates southern connections. It must not be forgotten that involuntary dreaming is a human biological pattern. The voluntary, i.e., induced, dream among the Athabascans must be interpreted as a distinctive Mackenzie trait; it is not a Plains element (though a markedly formalized exception appears with the Dakota[48]).

Shaman versus Layman

756/776/787 An informative aspect of the spirit concept is the distinction drawn between shaman and layman. Of course, where specialized spirits are recognized, certain ones being reserved for shamans, the distinction is automatically made. But it is pertinent to ask whether this is the only distinction or if other factors may play a role. Regardless of the tutelaries, is the quest identical for shaman and layman? The answer is positive for the entire Plateau excepting the Lillooet. Among the latter the shaman's quest is of markedly greater duration, activities differ, and shamanistic sponsorship is necessary (see above). There is the slightest suggestion of specialized activities among the Shuswap and Thompson; while the other two aspects of Lillooet practice, duration and sponsorship, point toward the Carrier. In this matter the Carrier affiliate with the Mackenzie area, or at least not with the Plateau. A

[45] Spier and Sapir, *Wishram Ethnography*, p. 240; Cline, *Southern Okanogan*, p. 139; Murdock, personal correspondence: "My own data are definitely negative on the dream in the spirit quest; the experience was strongly alleged to be a true waking experience (vision) and in no respect a dream or dreamlike, nor was there a dream upon return; Tenino dreams, I believe, are almost exclusively prophetic."

[46] Jenness, *Sekani Indians*, pp. 68 ff.

[47] Park, *Shamanism*, p. 111.

[48] Wissler, *Societies and Ceremonial Associations*, p. 81.

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further question: Is the vision type identical for shaman and layman? An affirmative answer here finds no exception but the Carrier, where the difference is marked (see above). A further common feature is the possession of greater power by the shaman. But this does not necessarily imply the possession of a greater number of spirits. However, the only exceptions are the Kalispel and Coeur d'Alêne, adjacent groups.

In this connection a statement made by Park requires attention:

> Throughout most of the Plateau area, the shaman is set off from other members of the group *simply* as the one who has greater but *not different* power. . . . The shaman is differentiated largely by the amount of power that he possesses and the curative results which he is *thereby* enabled to obtain.[49]

This would apply to the Klamath, as Spier's specific statements indicate[50] but certainly not to any other Plateau group, the Carrier included. Indeed, actual conceptions are just the reverse of this. No matter how strong a man's power may be, no matter how many guardians he may possess, he is utterly incapable of performing as a shaman unless (1) he has received a definite shamanistic spirit, or (2) he has been specifically commissioned by the spirit at the time of the quest vision, or (3) he has received shamanistic power by heredity. This point can not be too strongly emphasized since an inference like that by Park is so readily drawn from a description of spirits as non-specialized. Park was at the further disadvantage of having available only meager material upon which to base his conclusion; his assumptions grew naturally out of these circumstances.

Accompanying non-specialization—the notion that any spirit is capable of conveying any type of power—is invariably the further belief that upon *particular* occasion a spirit always conveys a *particular* type of power.

Throughout the Plateau (Wishram to Flathead, Klamath to Carrier) male shamans dominate numerically. But equally universally, women are admitted to the profession and considered wholly equal to men in ability and strength. At the mouth of the Columbia, among the Lower Chinook, female shamans are as numerous as male. This is true of other coastal groups as well. In the Plains the male figures almost to the exclusion of the female.[51] The Plateau is obviously intermediate. The unity

[49] Park, *Shamanism*, p. 92. Italics mine.
[50] Spier, *Klamath Ethnography*, pp. 107, 123.
[51] Benedict, *Vision in Plains Culture*, p. 2.

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753 To repeat, the soul is the human animating force; the spirit is the non-human, extrinsic tutelary.

The soul loss disease concept is provocative in distribution and relationships. It is found generally among the Salish of the Canadian Plateau, and also among the Carrier and Sekani.[63] It is known to the Southern Okanogan in rather anomalous form.[64] But the Kutenai lack it, as do all other peoples of the southern area except the Tenino and Klikitat. These cases are easily explained. By their position and isolation their debt to the Coast is indicated. The northern block likewise derived their beliefs from the Coast with little doubt, but via the Fraser Valley. This statement is justified not only by the distribution but by the phrasing of the notion, which is typically coastal. But why, with streams of influence penetrating on both north and south, did the bulk of the American area remain so unequivocally free of it? Because the infiltration was very recent? It appears recent, but I do not believe this is the explanation, or at least the whole explanation. It is hardly mere coincidence that the distributions of soul loss and spirit loss are almost mutually exclusive. Further, where there is overlapping (in the north: Lower Thompson, Lillooet, Kalispel) there is marked confusion of the two ideas. It appears that in the Plateau the well-developed notion of spirit loss inhibited acceptance of the newer concept of soul loss, so closely parallel conceptually. "Why should we accept the distorted interpretations of foreigners; we already had the belief in true form!" This phrasing reflects very closely the reactions of natives to whom I have cautiously pointed out the concept of their coastal neighbors.

THE WINTER SPIRIT DANCE

Essential Characteristics and Inter-areal Relationships

535 776 796 The Winter Guardian Spirit Dance is the major religious ceremony of the Plateau, dwarfing all other rituals by comparison.[65] It forms an elaborate complex which is readily identifiable. It is a simple matter to ascertain its presence or absence for a particular group, so characteristic is the combination of elements. And yet those very elements, in their individual distributions, are highly variable and carry over first into one, and then another, adjacent area. The inter-areal relation-

[63] Jenness, *Sekani Indians*, p. 72.

[64] Cline, *Southern Okanagon*, p. 163.

[65] See Ray, *Sanpoil and Nespelem*, pp. 189–200; cf. Spier, *Klamath Ethnography*, pp. 112–18, 266 f.

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ship of these elements between the Plateau and the Plains is considered in the next section. The principal concern here will be intra-Plateau relationships together with certain coastal analogues.

As indicated, the Winter Dance complex does not fade out at the distributional borders but instead stops abruptly. Thus it is present among the Kalispel, absent among the Kutenai; observed by the Okanogan, unknown to the Thompson. Furthermore, the dance of the Klamath and that of a tribe as far distant as the Flathead show many similarities of detail as well as basic likeness. The principal features of the complex may be outlined as follows: recognition of mid-winter as the exclusive and proper period for guardian spirit ceremonialism; specific sponsorship by shaman or one possessing guardian spirit; participation open to all possessing spirits; attendance open to all; spirit singing with individual leadership; spirit dancing with individual leadership; power contests; shamanistic performances; specific duration of several days (usually determined by pattern number); held indoors; dancing at night; feast or presentation of gifts, or both. These are not presented as invariable criteria; indeed, several of the elements enumerated might be omitted without destroying the identity of the complex.

Certain of the features mentioned receive strong emphasis among all groups observing the dance. Spirit singing, dancing, and shamanistic performances are prominent among these. The singing of guardian spirit songs forms the very core of the ceremony, but dances invariably accompany the songs in the complex here observed. Shamanistic performances play a large role among some groups, but among others are of lesser significance. The Klamath dance has been called "The Shamanistic Performance,"[66] reflecting the importance of this aspect, but the Umatilla, not far distant, recognize the performances as but one among many features. Other less fundamental elements vary in like manner from tribe to tribe. But the surprising thing is that they are not more varied, as would be anticipated from other aspects of the cultures. It is this historical fixity upon which emphasis is here placed. The complex, to be sure, is made up of elements of ultimately diverse origin; it is not presented as a single organic unit.

The Spirit Dance in Relation to the Potlatch

Regardless of variant emphasis upon one or another element, the raison d'être of the Plateau dance is invariably clear and unblended. It

[66] Spier, *Klamath Ethnography*, p. 112.

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is a spiritual ceremony pure and simple; the guardian spirit is the point of reference from whatever aspect viewed. In contrast, the comparable ceremony of the Quinault or Klallam of the Coast exhibits a dual basis, both conceptually and historically. Spirit singing is combined and integrated with the idea of the potlatch; the two cannot be treated separately. Thus, among the Klallam,

> A potlatch which is accompanied either with spirit singing or with a performance of the secret society is called l!a"anuk. This can take place either during the quiet-period or in the summer when the secret society ritual is held. At any of these potlatches there could be another performance of guardian spirit songs, in fact this is looked upon as one of the principal sources of entertainment [!]. If a man's wife or his son dances and sings during an evening's entertainment he will make gifts to all the men of the upper class who are present . . . to create good feeling and to display an individual's wealth.[67]

Of the Quinault we are told:

> In native theory an ordinary potlatch was in a way suggested by a man's guardian spirit. If a man had the "wealth spirit" the spirit would tell him "You had better throw (away) our money now. I (*i.e.*, the spirit) would like to see the people enjoy themselves and hear all the shamans sing their songs."[68]

These examples serve to place in clear relief the essential differences between the Winter Spirit Dance of the Plateau and the Spirit Singing-Potlatch of the Coast. The duality of purpose in the latter area is obvious. Furthermore, all of the following features of the Coast may differ from the Plateau: season, sponsorship, leadership of singing and dancing, nature of singing and dancing, power contests (absent), shamanistic performances (absent), and participation.

The historic diversity of the complexes of the Plateau and the Coast may be shown best by the case of the Lower Chinook. Here at the mouth of the Columbia River, where coastal and interior influences converge, both patterns are represented in clearly distinct forms.

The major religious ceremony is the guardian spirit dance. The time of the yearly dance is determined, to the native mind, by the period of spirit visitations, September until spring. Each dance occupies five days only, but many are held in various parts of Lower Chinook territory during the dance season. Dancers travel from one to another, other activities permitting. The dances are individually sponsored by

[67] Gunther, *Klallam Ethnography*, p. 306.
[68] Olson, *Quinault Indians*, p. 124.

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persons with guardian spirit power. The uniform procedure (apart from initiation ritualism) consists of spirit singing and dancing by all of those possessing power. Shamanistic or power performances, though a part of the dance program, seem to be relatively unimportant.[69] In all details this pattern conforms to the outline for the Plateau.

Lower Chinook "potlatches," which are held only in summer or fall, differ in sponsorship, motivation, and program, but emphasize spirit singing and dancing. Despite the differences, the question may arise:

> Why segregate these practices from the guardian spirit performances, since the most specialized feature was spirit singing and dancing? The answer is two-fold: First, the Chinook themselves made a distinction. They seemed to feel that this was a basic and generalized pattern of social activity into which might be fitted any specialized or distinctly categorized procedure. This framework was not essential to the integrity of certain specific practices; as a result the aspects were separable, producing a false impression of analogy. Thus the guardian spirit dance was distinctly fitted into the framework, so well fitted, indeed, that it had become virtually inseparable. But to call one a function or analogue of the other would do violence to native theory.[70]

Objective differences, which constitute the second factor, run fairly parallel to those enumerated above in analysis of Klallam and Quinault practices.

The almost invariable association of gift-giving with the Spirit Dance demands further consideration.[71] Can this be interpreted as an attenuated form of the potlatch? (If so, a "dual purpose" emerges for Plateau as well as Coast, and statements above are contradicted.) I have argued against such an assumption, even from the point of view of the Lower Chinook.

> There exists a real question as to whether it is justifiable to segregate under a separate term those practices having to do with feasting and gift-giving, especially when that term is one as fraught with meaning as the word potlatch. . . . All of the signification of the typical potlatch was absent [in Lower Chinook ceremonialism]. Presents were distributed but return was in no sense obligatory, to say nothing of return with interest. If the supply of

[69] Ray, *Lower Chinook*, pp. 81–83

[70] *Idem*, p. 95; cf. Ray, *Historical Position*, pp. 368 ff.

[71] The Klamath may be the one exception: "One informant said that beside the speaker the dancers were paid for their assistance, but this was explicitly denied by others" (Spier, *Klamath Ethnography*, p. 115).

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gifts were limited the upperclassmen were favored, but if there were plenty all received share and share alike! . . . Wealth songs were wholly unknown. Leadership in singing and dancing was limited to those with spirit power; wealth or social status was no substitute. Ceremonial grouping was based on village affiliation, not wealth or lineage. Demonstration of superiority by the hosts and the shaming of guests was limited to such neutral demonstrations as grossness of appetite, and even here the hosts dared not go too far.[72]

Of the Quinault, Olson writes:

Quinault potlatches stand about midway in the scale between the simple wealth displays of the south and the exaggerated and complicated ceremonials of the northern tribes. . . . The fundamental elements are the desire to gain a moderate amount of social prestige—the element of rivalry scarcely enters. The giving of goods is almost as much a privilege or an obligation as the occasion of display of vanity. The feasting and games bulk large in the picture. It is a festival, a "good time" period, with the words of the guardian spirit best expressing its tone and the native conception of the institution: "Your had better throw (away) our money now. I would like to see the people enjoy themselves and to hear all the shamans sing their songs."[73]

Though Olson is impressed by the differences between Quinault potlatching and that of the British Columbia coast, the two are much more akin than Quinault and Lower Chinook practices. This fact must be emphasized because geographical relationships are apt to create a wrong impression here. Were I to have encountered practices among the Lower Chinook which even approached those of the Quinault, I would in consequence have argued as vigorously for specific northern connections as I now do for viewing the complex as the result of cultural overlay upon a temporally old and widespread pattern of feasting and gift-giving, linking the Coast and the Plateau.[74]

But let us turn to the Plateau and examine actual practices there. At the Spirit Dance of the Sanpoil,

Practically every person who sang his song and led a dance contributed presents for the distribution on the last day of the dance. When one went to the center pole a relative or helper carried the presents to the spokesman who placed them on a long pole provided for that purpose. Contributing presents was not compulsory, however. Tom [an informant] insisted that those who did not give were not looked down upon. "But it made one feel

[72] Ray, *Lower Chinook*, p. 93.
[73] Olson, *Quinault Indians*, p. 129.
[74] Cf. Ray, *Historical Position*.

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better to give something away." Shamans, as a rule, gave more than laymen, and the sponsor of the dance gave most of all. . . . All those who had danced received presents. Those who had danced "hardest and best" were given the best ones. There was no prejudice against strangers in the bestowal. In fact, they were the first to receive presents. If the bulk of goods was very great, small gifts were sometimes presented to those who had not danced.[75]

Regarding the Wishram, we are told that the singers

gave some little things away; a few eagle feathers or some other articles they wore. A singer was not compelled to make gifts, but if he did not, he was classed as cheap, mean-minded, and selfish, and when such a one was hired to cure he was paid less than those who freely gave away their belongings. The belief was that one who gave freely knew that he had a strong spirit, would become a strong shaman when he was ready to practice, would secure the best of pay because he was more certain of a cure. Such a shaman could soon reimburse himself for the cost of these gifts.[76]

In describing the Spirit Dance of the Southern Okanogan, Cline speaks of the gift-giving feature as a "potlatch." However, his data not only belie the name, but are especially pertinent to the present inquiry. The general procedure parallels that of the Sanpoil. Like them, the host gave away more articles than anyone else.

These were a *reward to the people for helping him to control his power*, they were likewise regarded as *gifts to his guardian spirit*. It was believed that the spirit would compensate its generous protégé by a run of luck in gambling or hunting in the following summer. David said that a shaman who received a blanket or other gift at the dance did not feel obliged to make a return gift, for this was like "pay" to him for his singing and dancing, and that the giver regarded the gifts as a simple loss of property for the sake of his power.[77]

The relation is obvious between this point of view and that of the Wishram, as expressed above, but a further parallel appears with Flathead practice. Among the latter the audience does not receive the gifts; they are presented "to the center pole." Turney-High writes that on the last day of the ceremony a

dance is performed before the tree and *prayers to the guardians* are offered. As the night advances each person who has a wish prays and hangs a gift on

[75] Ray, *Sanpoil and Nespelem*, pp. 196, 199. Through a serious typographical error in the original printing the word "not" was omitted in the phrase "were not looked down upon."

[76] Spier and Sapir, *Wishram Ethnography*, p. 242.

[77] Cline, *Southern Okanagon*, pp. 151 f. Italics mine.

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The Secret Society

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We have seen that among the Klallam the potlatch may be combined with either spirit singing or secret society rituals, and to either combination the same name is applied. Again, among the Quinault the secret society rituals are sometimes associated with the potlatch.[82] But the Lower Chinook society is cast in the mold of the spirit dance and well integrated with the spirit concept.

> Eligibility to membership depended upon two factors, upper class status and the possession of a "secret society guardian spirit." The latter phrasing merely implied spirit instruction to join the society plus the conveyance of the necessary type of power. Such power was obtained in exactly the same fashion as any other. It consisted of the ability to inflict self-torture, followed by miraculous recovery. . . . The externals of [the initiation of the novice] were identical with the guardian spirit initiation.[83]

These parallels, as well as the absence of the society-potlatch combination, are undoubtedly due to indirect influences from the Plateau. The nature of the Lower Chinook Spirit Dance and much of the guardian spirit complex points to the interior. The Plateau has thus indirectly affected the local form of a typically Northwest Coast institution entirely unknown to it. Even as far northward as the Quinault, the "society" is considered a special kind of spirit, obtainable in the same fashion as any other, but it is not stated that possession of this spirit is essential to membership.[84]

The Spirit Singing of Puget Sound

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On Puget Sound spirit singing is frequent during the winter season, but available data are insufficient to establish the exact nature of the ceremony, or the structural relationship with the Spirit Dance of the Plateau. The actual spirit singing and dancing follow the Plateau pattern, but whether such activities are ever entirely divorced from the potlatch is uncertain. The latter is fairly well developed in typical form. According to Haeberlin

> The potlatch was a great feast given primarily for the distribution of gifts to the guests. Each person receiving gifts at such an occasion was under obligation to his host to invite him to his next potlatch and to give him an adequate gift in return. . . . If a man received one blanket, at his own potlatch he re-

[82] Olson, *Quinault Indians*, p. 121.
[83] Ray, *Lower Chinook*, pp. 89 f.
[84] Olson, *Quinault Indians*, pp. 120 f.

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turned two or three. . . . The sgwē'gwē' ["cultus potlatch" in Chinook jargon: "bad potlatch"] was held in summer when the salmon began to run. It could only be given by a man having the [wealth] spirit and was given in a potlatch house. . . . At this affair everyone tried to show the "power" he had. One man swallowed hot bullets and made them come out at his side.[86]

This indicates intimate relationship between the potlatch and spirit ceremonialism. However, the winter season was set apart for ceremonies specifically revolving around spirit singing.

Any time from the middle of November to the beginning of January a man's guardian spirit came back to him and urged him to sing his spirit songs and perform his dance. . . . Then he would call his friends together and they helped him sing and dance. . . . These dances varied greatly in length, for a man sang as long as his spirit commanded him to do so, often several days. At this dance no shaman was present.[86]

The absence of shamans clearly sets this apart from the Plateau dance, as well as the variable duration and the limitation of sponsorship to those experiencing the return of a spirit. Lummi practices seem to lie intermediate between those of lower Puget Sound and those of the Klallam. But the data are so non-definitive as to prohibit any specific interpretations.[87]

Intra-areal Relations

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Though the Winter Guardian Spirit Dance emerges as a highly typical Plateau complex, it is not found throughout the area. Indeed, as implied above, it is quite as definitely absent in the northern part of the region as in the Plains or on the Coast. It is shared uniformly by all central and southern Plateau groups, namely, the Klamath, Wishram,[88] Tenino, Umatilla, Cayuse, Nez Percé,[89] Yakima, Klikitat, Kittitas, Wenatchi, Columbia, Southern Okanogan, Sanpoil, Colville, Spokane, Lakes, Coeur d'Alêne, Flathead, Kalispel, and Okanogan. This is the familiar affiliation when a north-south contrast is found. The participation of the Klamath in this distribution is of marked significance since the Spirit Dance is quite unknown to the Basin and California. The sub-area of greatest integration and specialization appears to be the middle Columbia (Southern Okanogan, Sanpoil). This

[86] Haeberlin and Gunther, *Indians of Puget Sound*, pp. 59 f.
[86] *Idem*, p. 61.
[87] Stern, *Lummi Indians*, pp. 54 ff.
[88] Spier and Sapir, *Wishram Ethnography*, pp. 240–44.
[89] Spinden, *Nez Perce Indians*, pp. 262–64.